

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 AID-20 /083 W

----- 101983

O 261218Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4065

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL UDORN

CDR USSAG NKP

DIA

MACTHAI BANGKOK THAI/J3

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3736

JAKARTA FOR HABIB

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, US, LA

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN LAOS MAY 26

1. GLIMMER OF POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH. AS PROMISED SUNDAY, SOTH PHETRASY, MINISTER OF ECONOMY, SENT THE LAO TEST OF A PROPOSED AGREEMENT TO THE CHARGE, BUT IT ARRIVED ONLY AT 0730 MAY 26 WHEREAS SOTH HAD SUGGESTED IT BE SIGNED BY THE PARTIES CONCERNED AT 0900. THE CHARGE AND ACTING USAID DIRECTOR MET LATER IN THE MORNING SOUVANNA, SOTH AND FOREIGN MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT AT PRIME MINISTER'S RESIDENCE. ACCORD, IN PRINCIPLE, WAS REACHED ON POINTS TO BE CONTAINED IN A POSSIBLE COMPROMISE AGREEMENT AND SOTH WAS DISPATCHED BY THE
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PRIME MINISTER TO EXPLAIN THE TERMS OF THIS ACCORD TO

THE DEMONSTRATORS, WHO STILL OCCUPY THE USAID NA HAI DIAO COMPLEX AND OBTAIN THEIR CONCURRENCE. A REVISED DRAFT WAS DELIVERED AT 1730 HOURS AND IS NOW BEING TRANSLATED. (DETAILS OF CONVERSATION BY SEPTELS.)

2. NEW DEMONSTRATIONS SPRING UP IN TOWN* TWO NEW DEMONSTRATIONS--ONE AT THE DIRECTORATE OF AGRICULTURE AND THE OTHER AT THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS--BROKE OUT MORNING OF MAY 26. THE FIRST CALLED FOR THE OUSTER OF OROTH CHOUNRAMANY, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE AGRICULTURE DIRECTORATE, AND THE SECOND FOR REMOVAL OF PHAK SAVANN, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PUBLIC WORKS. (COMMENT: PHAK, LONG IDENTIFIED WITH THE CONSERVATIVE FORCES IN VIENTIANE, IS NOT A SURPRISING TARGET, BUT OROTH HAS REPUTATION FOR BEING A COMPETENT TECHNOCRAT. HIS SELECTION AS A TARGET, DEMONSTRATES EXTENT TO WHICH MIDDLE-ECHELON LAO BUREAUCRATS ARE BEING SQUEEZED.

3. CALM REIGNS AT USAID COMPOUND AND WAREHOUSES: SITUATION AT NA HAI DIAO COMPOUND HAS NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE LAST 24 HOURS AS 30-ODD DEMONSTRATORS AND 15 JOINT MILITARY PROTECTIVE FORCES (JMPF) REMAIN INSIDE THE FENCE. THREE AMERICANS REMAIN INSIDE THE USAID/DAO COMPOUND BUT THEY ARE WELL. JOINT MILITARY PROTECTIVE FORCES (JMPF) ARE STILL ON DUTY AT THE KM-9 AND KIM SUA WAREHOUSES; A SMALL JMPF CONTINGENT RETURNED TO THE USAID MEDICAL WAREHOUSE MAY 25 AND REMAINS INSIDE THE FENCE THERE.

4. KILOMETER 6 HOUSING AREA: JMPF TROOPS REMAIN ON DUTY OUTSIDE KM 6 GATE AND RESTRICTED ENTRY/EXIT TO SOME EXTENT OVERNIGHT. STARTING THIS MORNING VEHICLES WITH CD AND IT PLATES WERE AGAIN PERMITTED TO COME AND GO, BUT GATE WAS CLOSED AGAIN FOR UNKNOWN REASONS FROM 1200 TO 1530. MOST SERIOUS CURRENT PROBLEM AT KM 6 IS LOOTING OF VACANT HOUSING UNITS BY CHILDREN AND PROFESSIONAL THIEVES, WHICH HAS NOW REACHED MAJOR PROPORTIONS. EMPLOYEES LEFT IN KM 6 ARE TRYING TO MOUNT SECURITY PATROLS AS WELL AS TO PACK, BUT THE CANNOT COPE WITH THE LOOTING. WE ARE TRYING TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH MIXED POLICE FOR SECURITY OUTSIDE
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THE KM 6 PERIMETER; JMPF ON GATE DUTY ARE DOING NOTHING TO STOP LOOTING. WE ARE TRYING TO REACH SOTH AND PHOUMI, SO FAR IN VAIN.

5. OTHER HARASSMENT: AT LEAST FOUR U.S. MISSION RESIDENCES OUTSIDE KM 6 HAVE ALSO BEEN ROBBED IN LAST 48 HOURS; SOME WERE OCCUPIED BUT NONE HAD GUARDS. NO INJURIES IN THESE INCIDENTS.

CHAPMAN

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